

Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative's Employer Council Deep Dive

Conducted in partnership with the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia



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Executive Summary

Introduction

With direction from Temple University’s Lenfest Center for Community Workforce Partnerships, the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia (ELGP) conducted the Temple University Employer Council Deep Dive (hereafter referred to as the “Deep Dive”) to identify data-driven, employer-informed opportunities to increase the hiring, retention, and advancement of talent in North Philadelphia. The following report details the findings and recommendations discovered through this project.

Project Overview

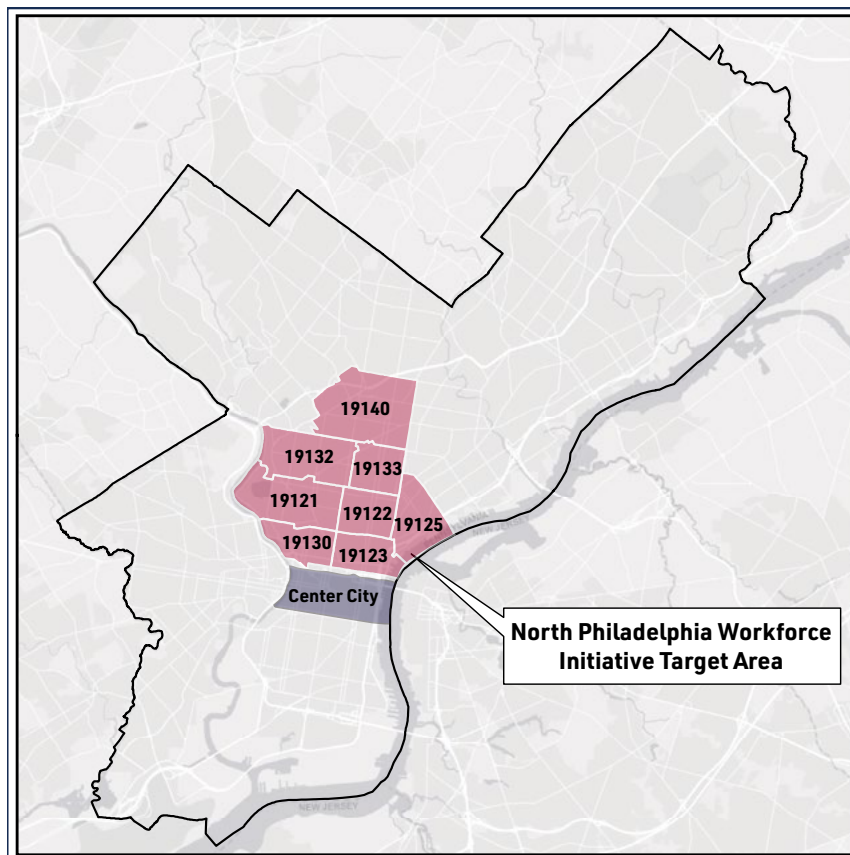
To identify shared challenges among employers, ELGP conducted interviews with members of Temple University’s Employer Council, extrapolating common themes among the differing perspectives. ELGP then analyzed the current programs under the Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative’s (LNPWI) Opportunities for Workforce Leadership (OWL) Collective to evaluate the network’s capacity to meet these common challenges. In comparing employers’ shared experiences to the resources offered by the OWL Collective, ELGP was able to identify ways to maximize the benefit of this partnership for both parties.

Findings

FINDING 1

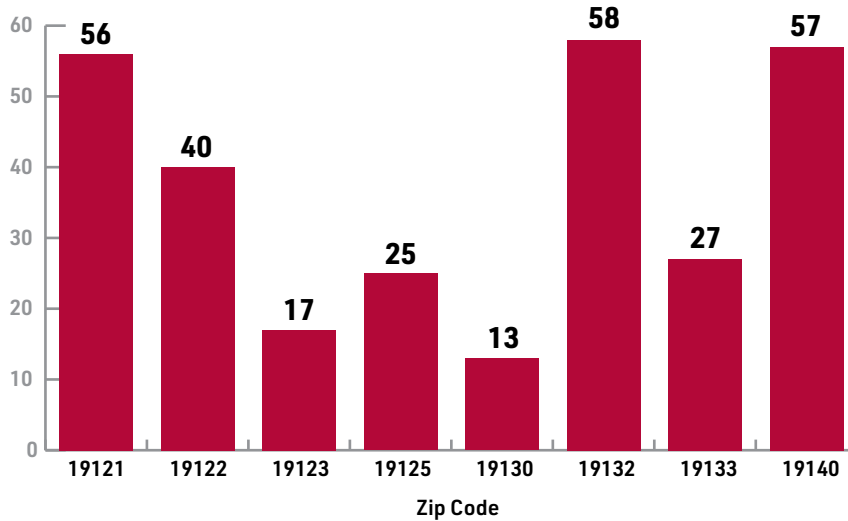
On average, employers included in this study experienced a 26% turnover rate among entry-level employees in 2021, which is lower than the state’s rate among all employees for that same period (39.1%).¹ This turnover creates opportunities for local hiring; however only approximately 10.7% of these entry-level employees reside in one of LNPWI’s eight target zip codes.

Figure 1 – LNPWI Target Area Map



Source: Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative

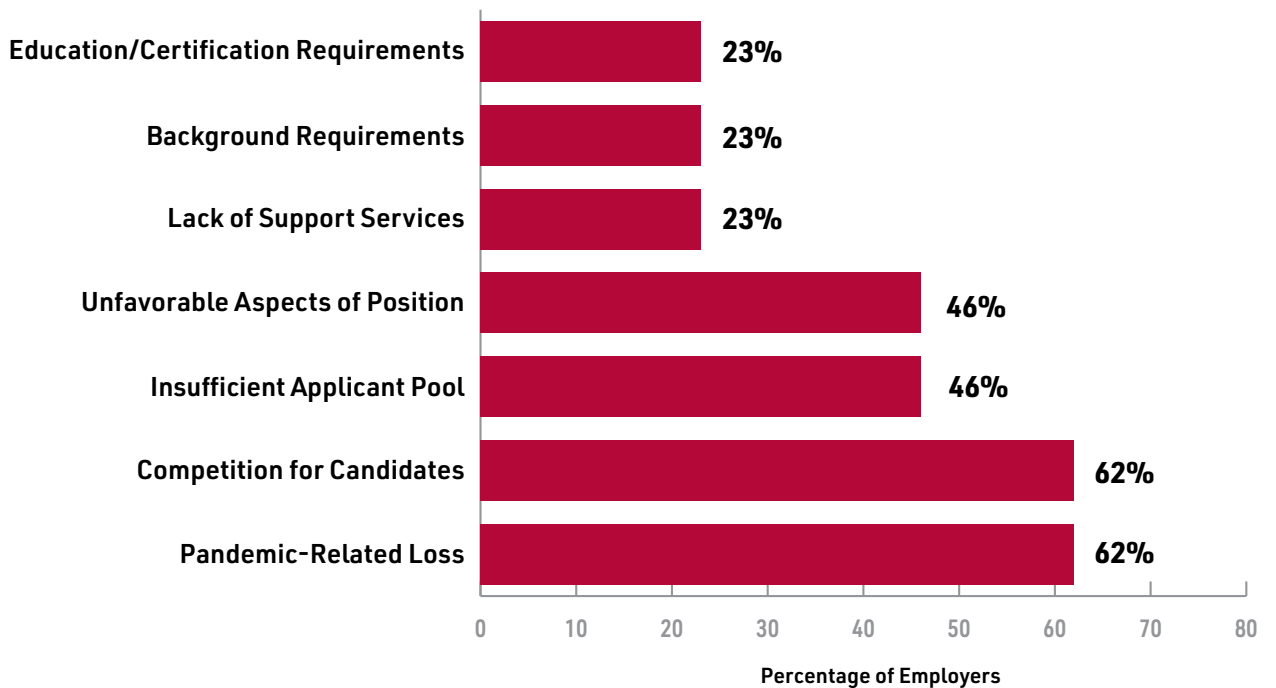
Figure 2 – Entry-Level Employees by Zip Code (LNPWI Target Area)



FINDING 2

Employers expressed that competition for candidates, pandemic-related employee turnover, an insufficient number of applicants, and unfavorable aspects of the position are consistent challenges in recruiting and retaining entry-level employees.

Figure 3 – Common Employer Challenges

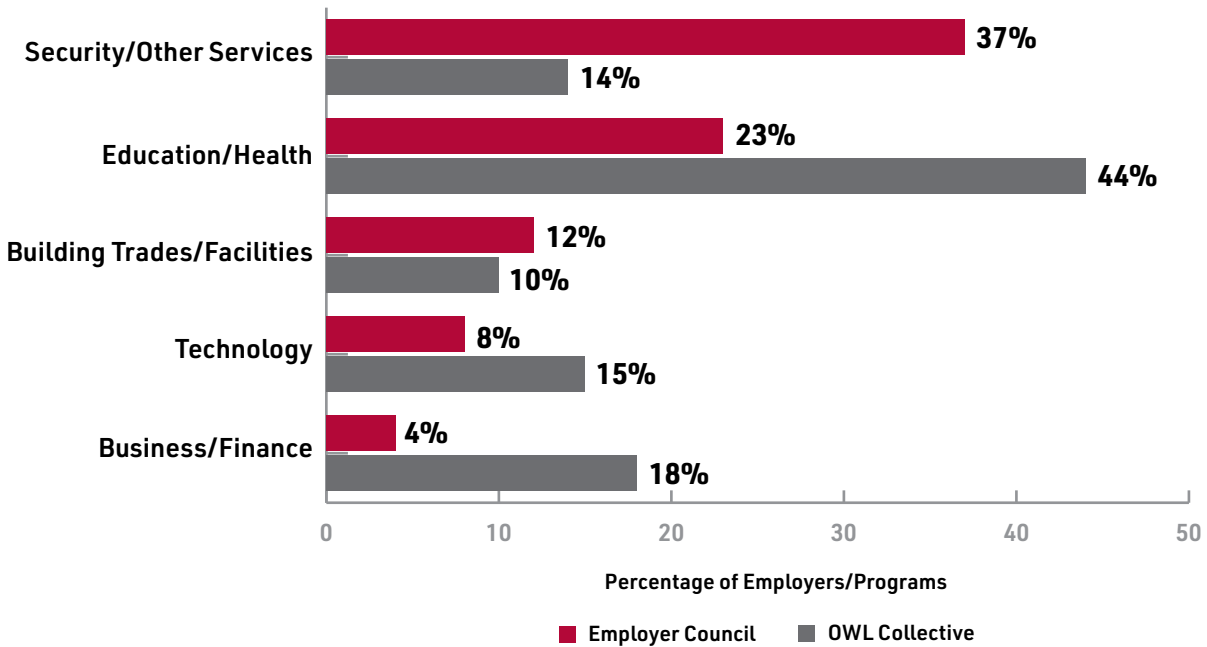




FINDING 3

LNPWI’s OWL Collective services adequately represent all industries in the Employer Council except employers in Security/Other Services, most likely due to the large number of Council members representing law enforcement and security services.

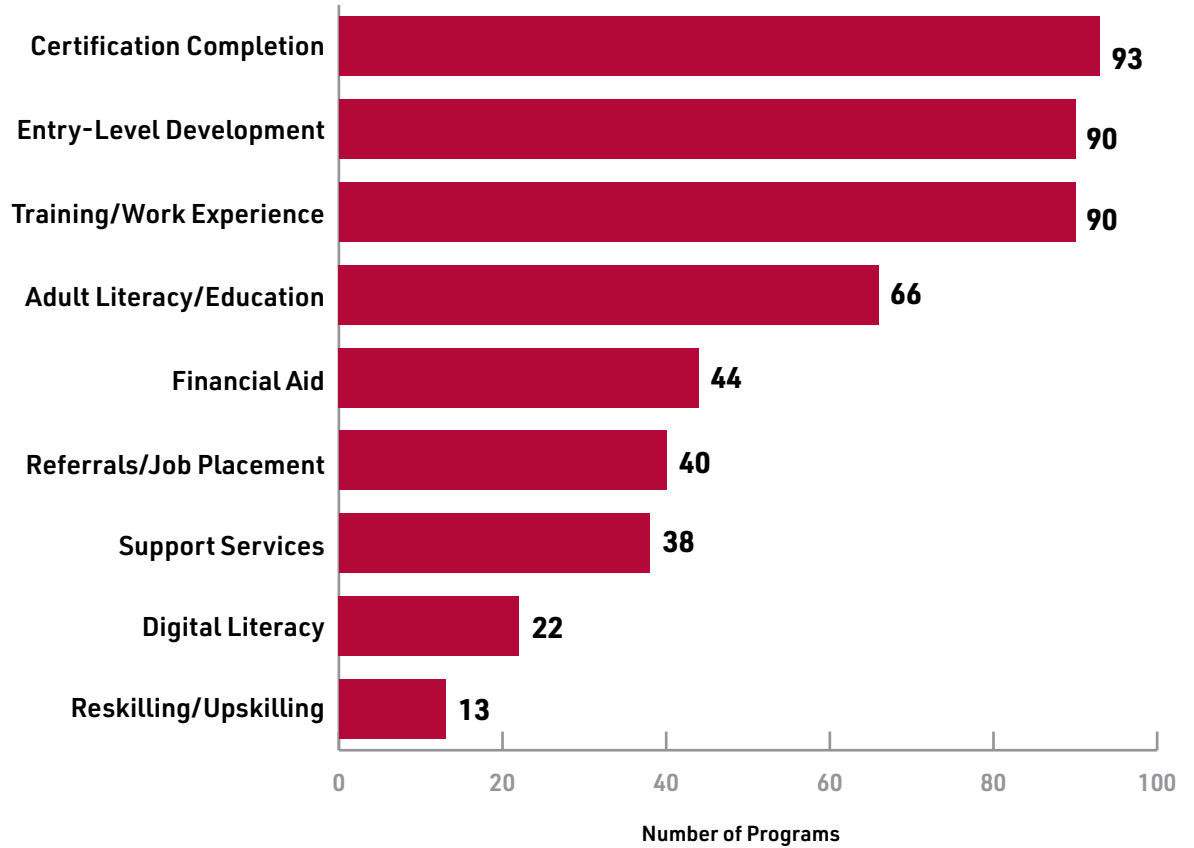
Figure 4 – Industry Representation, LNPWI’s OWL Collective versus Temple University’s Employer Council



FINDING 4

The OWL Collective provides an abundance of resources offering certification completion, entry-level development, training, and work experience, all of which could be useful in widening employers' applicant pool and attracting qualified candidates. The high rate to which employers are still experiencing these challenges reveals a lack of resource utilization, rather than a lack of resources.

Figure 5 – Types of Workforce Development Services (OWL Collective)



Recommendations

ELGP identified the following recommendations for both LNPWI and employers. “Internal Recommendations” refer to specific recommendations for LNPWI’s internal services, while “Joint Recommendations” refer to collaborative recommendations for both LNPWI and the employers of Temple University’s Employer Council.

INTERNAL RECOMMENDATION 1

Expand the OWL Collective to include organizations with support services more specifically addressing challenges uniquely faced by North Philadelphia’s population.

- Over 25% of the 2.5 million women who left the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic did so due to increased responsibility to care for children and family members and lack of affordable childcare options.²
 - Even without the effects of the pandemic, North Philadelphia’s communities face heightened barriers to employment due to a lack of access to childcare, transportation, digital literacy, and other supportive services.³
- LNPWI’s priority populations least represented through the OWL Collective are individuals with a disability (3.7% of targeted programs) and individuals with limited English proficiency (9% of targeted programs).
 - Half of the immigrant population in North Philadelphia hold a high school diploma or less.⁴
 - Half of all zip codes targeted by LNPWI have above-average rates of individuals experiencing disabilities.⁵

INTERNAL RECOMMENDATION 2

Construct new workforce development resources for individuals who do not have a high school diploma or official form of identification to ensure complete accessibility of OWL Collective resources.

- According to our analysis of 169 OWL Collective programs, 33% require participants to have a High School Diploma or GED, and 24% require proof of legal residency within the United States. These proportions only include programs that specifically communicated these requirements — the actual number of programs upholding these barriers may be even larger. Though these proportions seem small in comparison to the sum of the OWL Collective’s services, it is important to note that individuals facing these barriers disproportionately represent locations and industries important to LNPWI.
 - On average, one in four North Philadelphia residents do not have a high school diploma, the second most common education level in the area besides the 40% of residents with only a high school degree.⁶ Not only do most entry-level positions require a high school diploma or equivalency, but some of the workforce development services in Philadelphia do as well.
 - Undocumented residents are estimated to make up over one-third of Philadelphia’s foreign-born population over 18 years old.⁷

JOINT RECOMMENDATION 1

Foster strong connections between employers and OWL Collective resources that can increase employers' access to potential candidates, including not only services providing referral/job placement activities, but also training and certification-earning organizations.

- The OWL Collective currently includes 40 programs with referral/job placement services, 90 programs that offer job training or experience, and 93 programs that help individuals earn credentials.
- These programs include 12 that target jobs in Construction/Building Trades, 40 that target jobs in Healthcare, 37 that target jobs in Education & Human Services, 19 that target jobs in IT & Technology, and 17 that target jobs in Food Service & Hospitality. Below are just a few examples:
 - Healthcare
 - Congreso Human Services Pathway Program
 - TempleCARES
 - IT & Technology
 - Coded by Kids
 - TechImpact ITWorks
 - Construction/Building Trades
 - Impact Services Corp Trades Program
 - Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

These resources cultivate workers that are specifically trained and prepared to fulfill certain entry-level positions. Partnership with this type of organization may grant employers early access to well-qualified candidates.

JOINT RECOMMENDATION 2

Identify opportunities for employers to provide upskilling and career advancement resources to their employees by utilizing current OWL Collective organizations and seeking new resources if necessary.

- Opportunities to upskill and advance their careers beyond entry-level positions has become extremely important to candidates when considering job offers. Young adults ranked upskilling as the third-most influential benefit when deciding to accept or reject a job offer, behind only pay and health benefits.⁸
- Similarly, a study by Bright Horizons found that 60% of millennials would rather work somewhere with professional development opportunities than regular pay raises.⁹
- Upward mobility not only increases the likelihood that a candidate will choose one employer over the other but has also been found to improve retention rates among current employees. On average, workers who are given the ability to upskill are more satisfied with their job's pay rate and schedule; they also report a higher sense of purpose within their daily work.¹⁰
- Additionally, 62% of workers say that opportunities to reskill and upskill would incentivize them to stay with a current employer.¹¹

Introduction

To support the success of the Temple University Employer Council for Local Hiring, the Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative has partnered with the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative and the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia to conduct an **Employer Council Deep Dive**.¹² This collaborative exploration sought to identify data-driven, employer-informed opportunities to increase the hiring, retention, and advancement of North Philadelphia talent. This was achieved by investigating employers' major challenges in hiring, retaining, and advancing North Philadelphia workers and establishing innovative solutions using the resources available through the Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative's OWL Collective.

The Economy League of Greater Philadelphia (ELGP) served as the primary research partner, with the Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative providing support and facilitating connections to members of the Employer Council, and the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative serving as a thought partner and advisor.

Background

The **Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative (LNPWI)** was created in March 2018 through the support of Temple University and funding from the Lenfest Foundation. The goal of this initiative is to break the cycle of poverty in North Philadelphia communities. To achieve this goal, LNPWI aims to connect residents to sustainable job opportunities that offer family-sustaining wages and upward mobility through connections with major economic and workforce development initiatives across Philadelphia. For the past four years, LNPWI has focused on improving two conditions prevalent in North Philadelphia: unemployment/underemployment and employment in low-wage or low-growth employment opportunities.¹³ Utilizing Temple University's connections throughout the city, LNPWI curated the following two groups to facilitate connections among workforce development stakeholders.

- **OWL COLLECTIVE:** In September 2019, LNPWI recognized a need to coordinate efforts between education and workforce development providers across the city, thus creating the **Opportunities for Workforce Leadership (OWL) Collective**.¹⁴ LNPWI aims to use the OWL Collective to cultivate a network of organizations dedicated to meeting challenges in the workforce development system with innovative solutions.
- **EMPLOYER COUNCIL:** LNPWI held its first meeting for the **Temple University Employer Council for Local Hiring** in May 2021, aiming to encourage the employment of North Philadelphia residents within Temple University, its partners and vendors, and other large employers in the city. The Council consists of leaders from 10 Temple University departments, 10 other major employers, and three workforce development organizations that meet monthly to discuss perspectives, challenges, and practices in hiring and retention.¹⁶

Methodology

Summary

The Employer Council Deep Dive was conducted over a six-month period. While the bulk of the analysis was rooted in participant interviews with members of the Employer Council, we also utilized findings from a quantitative analysis of available occupational-level data provided by Employer Council members as well as a content analysis of online materials provided by LNPWI and OWL collective to formulate our findings and recommendations. These data sources, as well as exploratory research on current workforce development conditions and services in Philadelphia, allowed ELGP to gain a comprehensive understanding of the hiring and retention challenges local employers face as well as determine what resources may be useful in closing these employment gaps.

For a more detailed explanation of how the data in this report was collected and analyzed, please refer to the full methodology in the appendix, under “Methodology.”

Findings

Employment Landscape

Employee Demographics

Members of the Employer Council are selected by LNPWI based on their relationship to Temple University and/or their status as a major employer within Philadelphia. Measured by the approximate number of workers employed by these organizations, LNPWI has formed a cohort represents over 15% of total employees in Philadelphia. The employee data presented in this report represents entry-level employees from three members of the Employer Council, representing a total of 2,738 entry-level workers.

Among the sample of entry-level employees in Philadelphia, there is a nearly equal proportion of Black/African American (39.8%) and White (33.7%) employees. The remaining employees largely identified as either Asian (10.5%) or Hispanic/Latinx (10.1%). A majority (57%) of entry-level workers are between the ages of 25–54, with the second-largest age category being 18–24 years of age (25.5%).

Figure 1 – Entry-Level Employees by Race

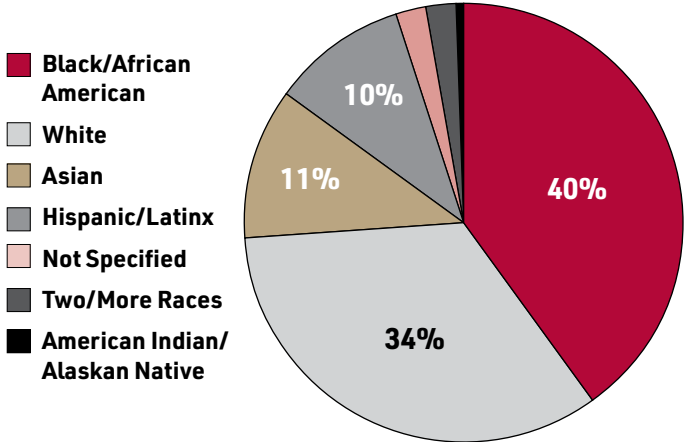
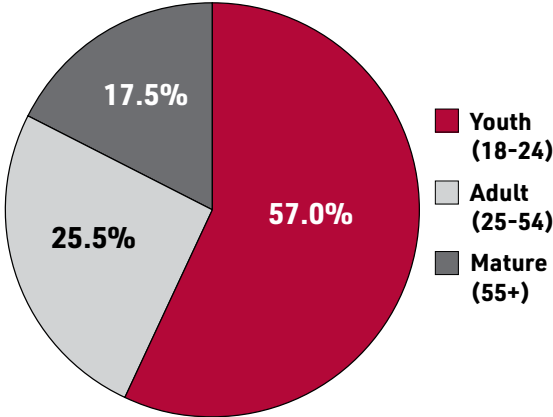


Figure 2 – Entry-Level Employees by Age



Employment Opportunities

LNPWI's primary focus is connecting North Philadelphia residents to employment opportunities in entry-level positions that pay family-sustaining wages. In creating the Employer Council, LNPWI initiated the connection of these communities to tangible, in-demand positions with the city's major employers. The following table and charts represent only a sample of entry-level positions, including the current number of employees and average wage in Philadelphia for each role.

In comparing occupations with the highest average annual salary to those with the lowest average, a pattern emerges between more stringent requirements and higher average annual salaries suggests that opportunities for careers with family-sustaining wages are more limited for candidates without official educational credits or certifications.

The highest-paid entry-level job titles within the sample are Medical Assistants (\$82,531), Science Technicians (\$73,500), Fire Service Paramedics (\$68,656), Management Trainees (\$66,847), and Construction Projects Technicians (\$66,413). Of these five positions, three require a certification and/or completion of a vocational program, and one requires a bachelor's degree.¹⁷

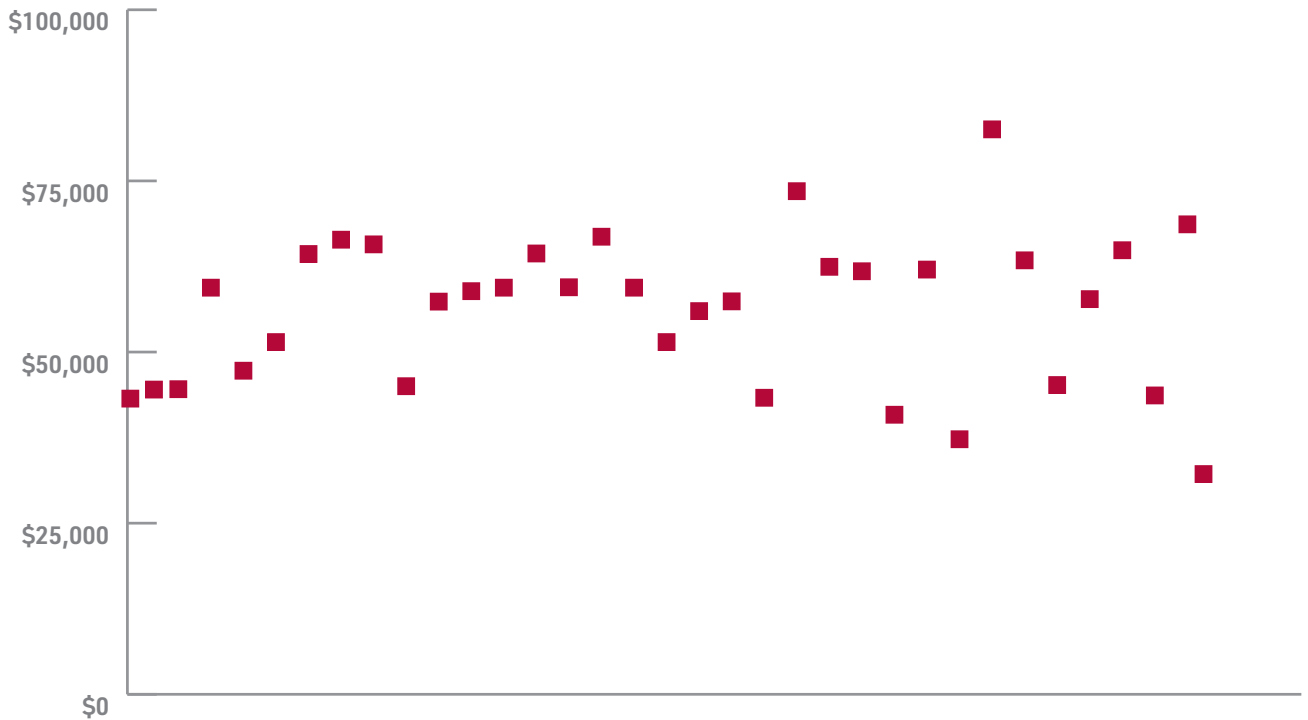
Note: Values were rounded to the nearest dollar. Hourly rates were annualized based on a full-time work year, 2,080 hours.

Table 1 – Characteristics of Available Entry-Level Positions Provided by Employer Council

Entry-Level Job Titles	Number of Employees	Average Annual Salary
Medical Assistant	59	\$82,531
Science Technician	41	\$73,500
Fire Service Paramedic	281	\$68,656
Management Trainee	16	\$66,847
Construction Projects Technician	5	\$66,413
Administrative Technical Trainee	6	\$65,729
Deputy Sheriff Officer	226	\$64,873
Plumber	13	\$64,399
Mammographer	4	\$64,321
Water Distribution Repair Worker	70	\$63,398
Social Work Services Trainee	43	\$62,450
Industrial Process Machinery Mechanic	51	\$62,048
Building Maintenance Mechanic	47	\$61,802
Engineering Aide	16	\$59,462
Graduate Civil Engineer	19	\$59,404
Graduate Environmental Engineer	13	\$59,404
Graduate Mechanical Engineer	2	\$59,404
Public Works Maintenance Trainee	12	\$58,893
Police Officer Recruit	130	\$57,730
Electronic Technician	38	\$57,404
Automotive Maintenance Technician	11	\$57,367
Technical Support Employee	22	\$55,980
Accountant/Revenue/Auditor Trainee	20	\$51,455
Auditor Trainee	3	\$51,455
Airport Operations Trainee	3	\$47,273
Administrative Specialist	71	\$45,180
Electrician	7	\$45,010
Information Technology Trainee	2	\$44,573
HVAC Mechanic	2	\$44,519
Housekeeping Employee	244	\$43,659
Receptionist	41	\$43,320
Youth Detention Counselor Trainee	3	\$43,199
Security Officer	51	\$40,840
Dental Assistant	53	\$37,260
Retail Rx Technician	1,100	\$32,175
Total:	2,738	Average: \$55,518

The lowest-paid job titles in the sample are Youth Detention Counselor Trainees (\$43,199), Security Officers (\$40,840), Dental Assistants (\$37,260), Dispatchers (\$36,700), and Retail Rx Technicians (\$32,175). In contrast to the highest-paying positions, only two positions express educational requirements: one requires a certification, and one requires the participant be enrolled in a bachelor's program.¹⁸

Figure 3 – Average Annual Salary for Entry Level Employees



Employer Experiences

Persistent Challenges

Employers expressed several obstacles relating to employee recruitment and retention that can be attributed to seven root challenges. These challenges and the frequency of their mention within participant interviews are shown in figure 3. The most cited challenges were Competition for Candidates and Pandemic-Related Loss, each mentioned by 62% of employers interviewed. Other mid-priority challenges included Unfavorable Aspects of Position and Insufficient Applicant Pool, each mentioned by 46% of employers. These findings are important in ensuring that LNPWI prioritizes connections and services that are relevant to the needs of the Council.

The impact of COVID-19 on the workforce, when acting alongside a greater competition for candidates, has caused many employers to struggle with retaining employees in entry-level positions. Table 2 indicates that employers experienced an average separation rate of 28% in 2021, which is approximately 11 percentage points lower than the city's rate for the same year (39.1%).¹⁹

The positions with the highest separation rates are Youth Detention Counselor Trainees (1,067%), Social Worker Services Trainee (88%), and Airport Operations Trainees (67%). All three are Trainee positions that employees complete before moving into a higher role, which could explain why they experience the highest rates of turnover. This could also be due in part to difficult aspects of that position or unwanted exposure to the public during the pandemic.

Figure 4 – Employer Challenges

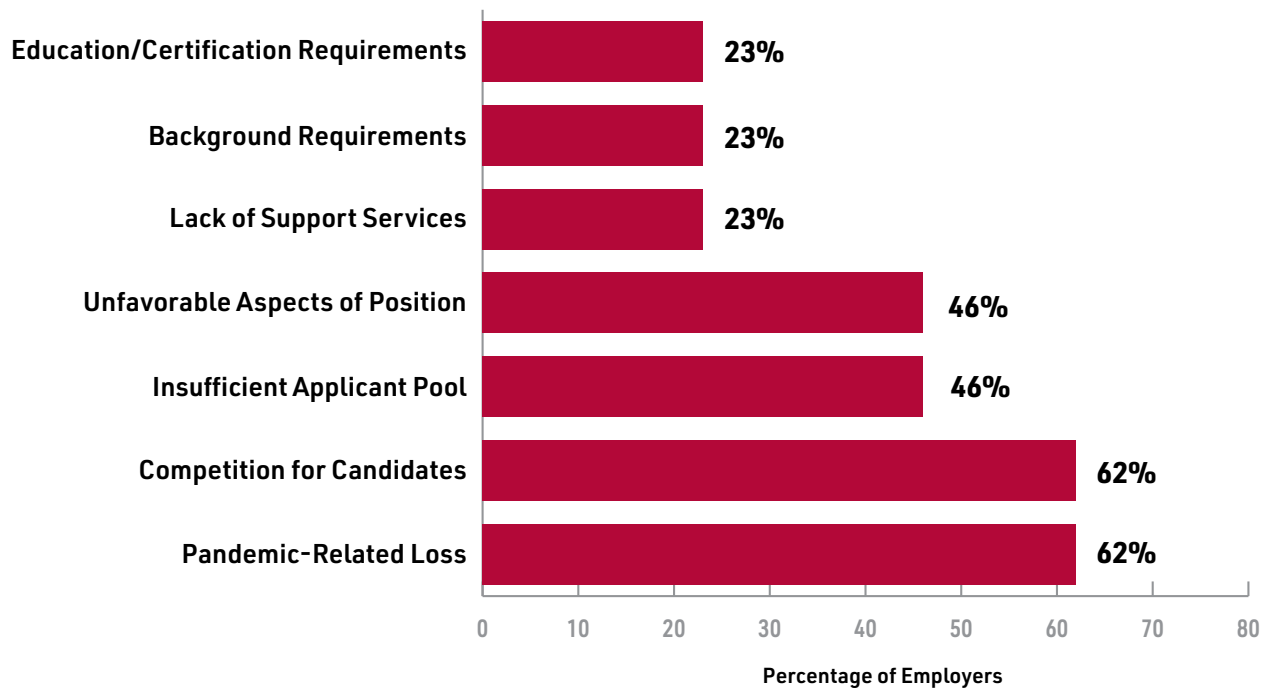


Table 2 – Separations by Position (2021)

Entry-Level Job Titles	Separations (2021)	Rate
Youth Detention Counselor Trainee	32	1,067%
Social Work Services Trainee	38	88%
Airport Operations Trainee	2	67%
Electrician	4	57%
Graduate Mechanical Engineer	1	50%
HVAC Mechanic	1	50%
Information Technology Trainee	1	50%
Retail Rx Technician	536	49%
Automotive Maintenance Technician	5	45%
Public Works Maintenance Trainee	5	42%
Construction Projects Technician	2	40%
Medical Assistant	19	32%
Plumber	4	31%
Industrial Process Machinery Mechanic	15	29%
Building Maintenance Mechanic	13	28%
Engineering Aide	4	25%
Graduate Environmental Engineer	3	23%
Technical Support Employee	5	23%
Dental Assistant	11	21%
Water Distribution Repair Worker	15	21%
Administrative Specialist	12	17%
Graduate Civil Engineer	3	16%
Police Officer Recruit	21	16%
Dispatcher	2	15%
Receptionist	6	15%
Security Officer	7	14%
Electronic Technician	4	11%
Housekeeping Employee	27	11%
Accountant/Revenue/Auditor Trainee	2	10%
Fire Service Paramedic	28	10%
Science Technician	2	5%
Deputy Sheriff Officer	1	0.40%
Administrative Technical Trainee	0	0%
Auditor Trainee	0	0%
Mammographer	0	0%
Management Trainee	0	0%
	Average	26%

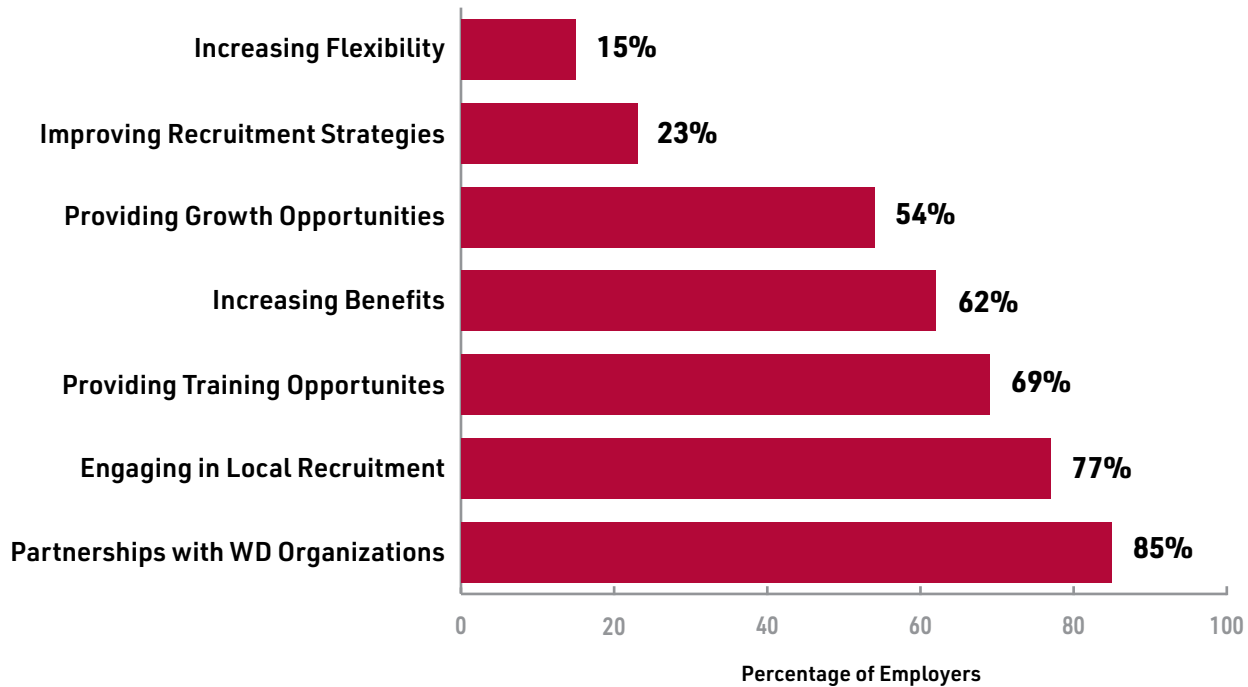
Notes: Separation rates were rounded to the nearest percent, except in cases where the rate was less than 1%.

As an outlier, the separation rate for Youth Detention Counselor Trainees was not included in the calculation of the average separation rate.

Workforce Development Practices

In response to these challenges, employers adopted new and reinforced existing practices to improve recruitment and retention for entry-level positions. By far, the most common practice among Council members was engaging in Partnerships with Workforce Development Organizations, which is practiced by 85% of interviewed employers. Other shared practices include Providing Training Opportunities (69%), Engaging in Local Recruitment (77%), and Increasing Benefits (62%). Among the least prevalent strategies practiced by employers were Increasing Flexibility (15%) and Improving Recruitment Strategies (23%).

Figure 5 – Employer Practices

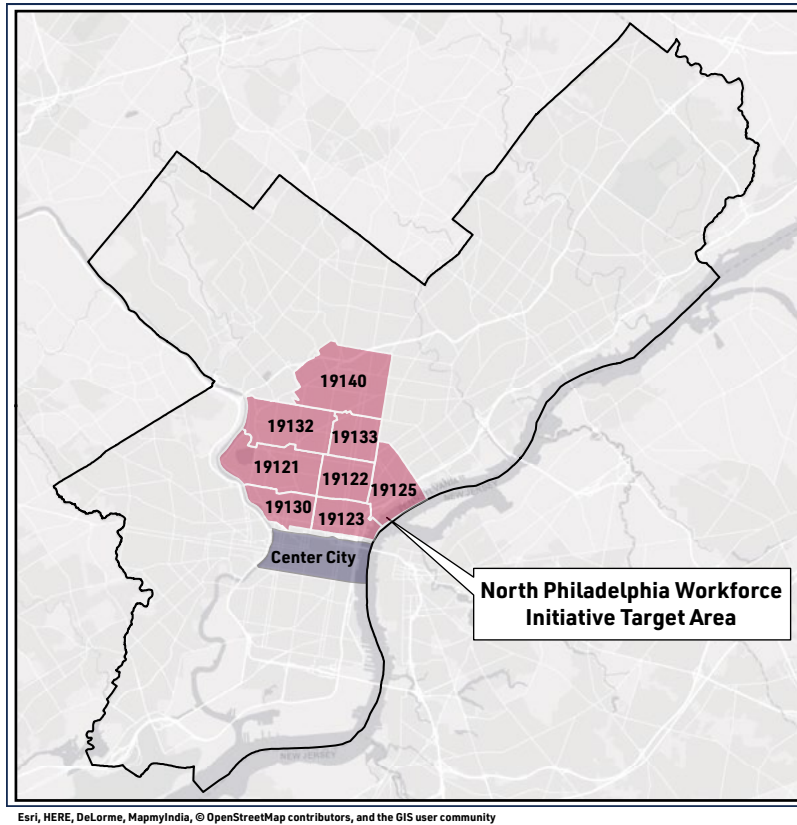


Below are some specific examples of how members of the Employer Council are putting these strategies into practice:

- Providing Training Opportunities — In September 2021, PECO announced that it would be holding a free, three-day training program for candidates to prepare for applying to Apprenticeship positions. The Infrastructure Academy included educating applicants on the positions' roles and responsibilities, holding mock interviews with feedback, and practicing aspects of the hands-on skill assessment process.²⁰
- Increasing Benefits — In August 2021, CVS Health announced a raise in its minimum wage for all employees from \$11 to \$15 an hour by July 2022, even though approximately two-thirds of employees already exceeded that rate. All roles, even those that begin at a rate higher than the new minimum wage, would receive a pay increase of some sort.²¹
- Providing Growth Opportunities — Prior to the pandemic, Comcast established a program that enables its frontline employees to upskill and pursue careers in software development. The Grows to Code program was designed to expand the company's employee pipeline from entry-level positions to higher paying careers. By partnering with LaunchCode, Comcast formed a 13-week coding-focused educational course, throughout which employees are paid full-time at their previous hourly rate.²²

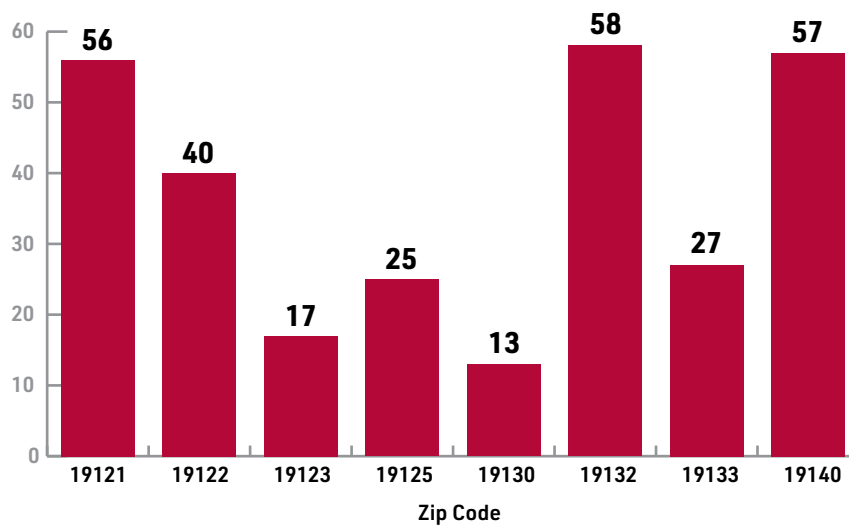
- Engaging in Local Recruitment — Of the over 2,000 employees whose data was included in this study, approximately 7.4% (167 employees) lived in one of LNPWI's eight target zip codes. Figure 7 shows the breakdown of employees per zip code.

Figure 6 – LNPWI Target Area Map



Source: Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative

Figure 7 – Entry-Level Employees by Zip Code (LNPWI Target Area)



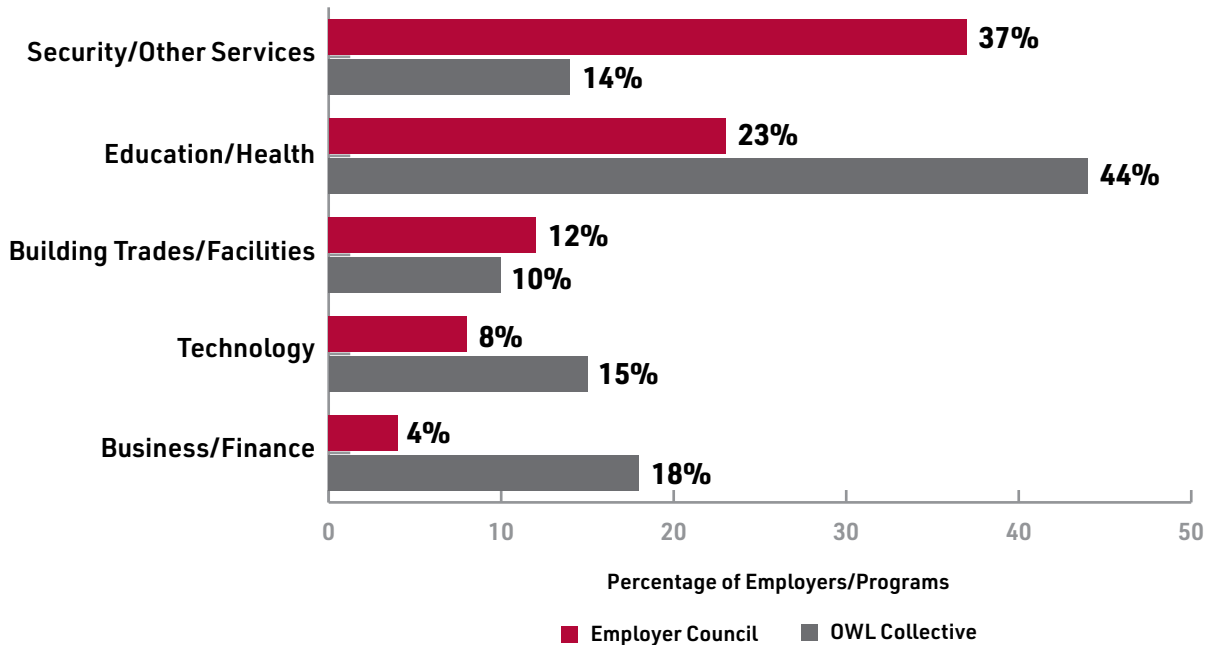


OWL Collective

Types of Industries

When comparing the OWL Collective's industry-specific programs to the sectors represented in Temple University's Employer Council, there are some misalignments.²³ Specifically, the Collective lacks sufficient programs and services designed for employment in the Security/Other Services industry, which represents the highest percentage of Council members (37%). This is most likely due to an overrepresentation of Philadelphia's Security/Other Services Employers on the Employee Council.

Figure 8 – Industry Focus (Employer Council versus OWL Collective)²⁴

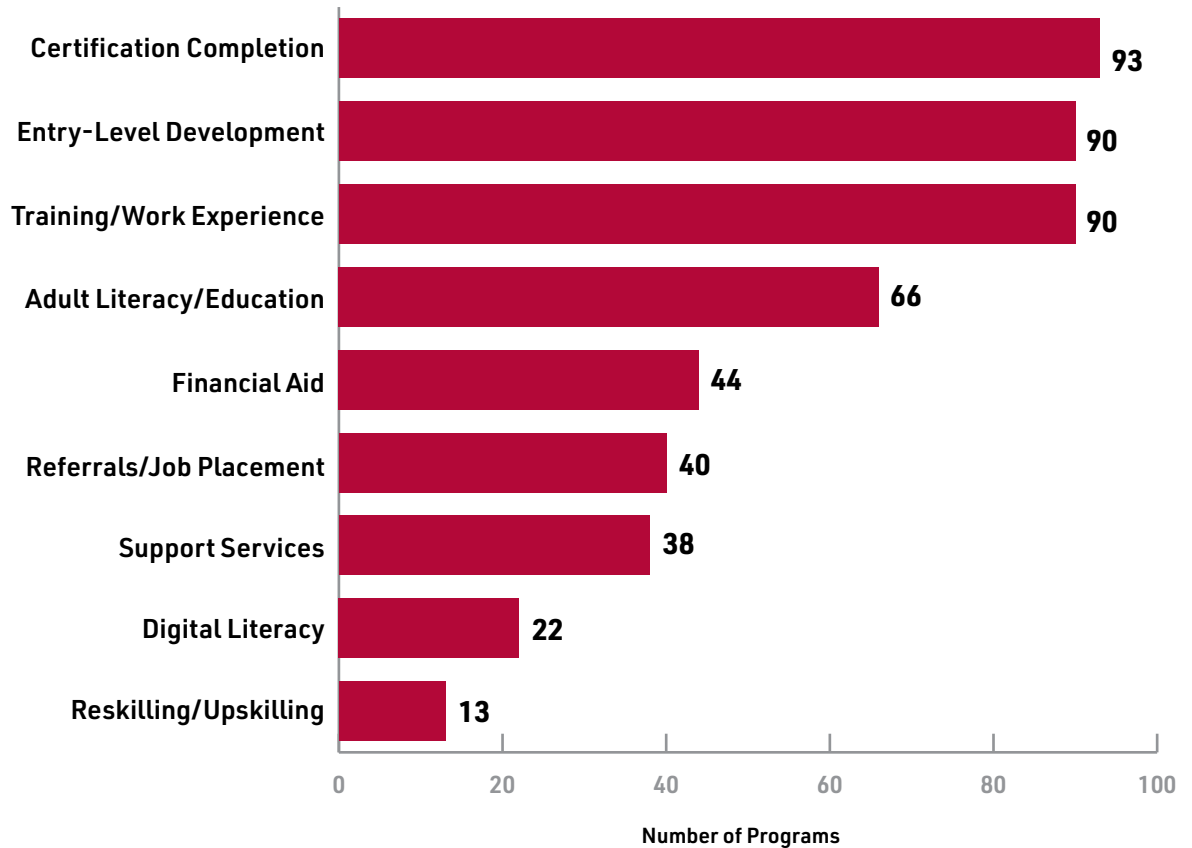


Workforce Development Services

In investigating the various types of services provided by OWL Collective members and their programs, ELGP found that Entry-Level Development, Training/Work Experience, and Credential-Earning services are the most abundant resources within LNPWI's workforce development network (53.3%, 53.3%, and 55%, respectively). The Collective's least available service was Reskilling/Upskilling resources at 7.8%. When considering the retention challenges cited by several employers, the lack of this resource may diminish the ability of the OWL Collective to meet employers' needs.



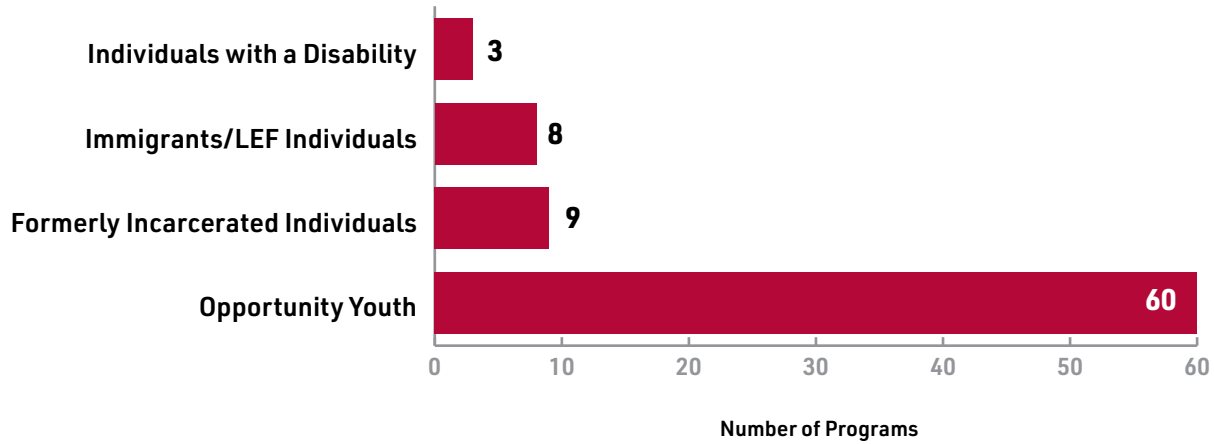
Figure 9 – OWL Collective Services



Priority Populations

An overwhelming majority of OWL Collective programs that prioritize certain populations target their services towards Opportunity Youth (75%).²⁵ Formerly Incarcerated Individuals, Individuals with a Disability, and Immigrants or English Language Learners are the targets of the remaining 15% of population-specific programs.

Figure 10 – OWL Collective Population Targets



Recommendations

With the above findings in mind, ELGP formulated several recommendations for LNPWI and the Temple University Employer Council to consider. These suggestions can prepare LNPWI to better serve the Council by building direct connections between employers and OWL Collective resources that meet their specific recruitment and retention needs.

INTERNAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the completion of this Deep Dive, ELGP has uncovered areas in which LNPWI could improve internally through seeking new connections and strengthening existing partnerships that serve North Philadelphia's un- and under-employed population. Through the expansion of these workforce development services, LNPWI will increase its effectiveness in reaching its priority populations and preparing communities for family-sustaining, meaningful employment.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Expand the OWL Collective to include organizations with support services that specifically address challenges uniquely faced by North Philadelphia's population.

LNPWI currently expresses a specific interest in serving populations that may experience increased challenges or additional barriers to finding adequate entry-level careers. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain communities have suffered heightened difficulties in finding and maintaining employment under these new conditions.

- In the past few years, the pandemic has distinctly impacted the viability of maintaining careers in healthcare and other frontline services. Roughly 62% of frontline workers worry that the stress they experience, both due to the essential nature of their position and the direct danger of contracting the virus, has had a direct, negative impact on both their mental and physical wellbeing.²⁶
- For women, especially those who are also members of the BIPOC community or face additional employment barriers, COVID-19 has made managing a full-time job less achievable. From the beginning of the pandemic to 2021, approximately 2.5 million women disappeared from the U.S. workforce.²⁷ Over 25% of these losses were due to the increased responsibility to care for children and family members, coupled with a lack of access to affordable elderly and childcare services.²⁸
- As seen in Table 11, the entry-level positions with the highest proportion of female employees are Medical Assistants (98%), Administrative Assistants (93%), and Dental Assistants (92%). Two-thirds of these occupations involve working in the medical field, which greatly increases one's risk of contracting the coronavirus.

Even without the effects of the pandemic, North Philadelphia’s communities face heightened barriers to employment due to a lack of access to childcare, transportation, digital literacy, and other supportive services. These disadvantages are only emboldened for certain populations such as people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. Barriers such as these cause challenges for employers as well, who express a lack of applicants in entry-level positions at high rates (46%).

Supportive Services

Currently, about 22.5% of OWL Collective programs offer some sort of supportive services to participants, whether it be childcare, transportation, or other assistance. Examples of these programs include:

- Maternity Care Coalition’s Early Head Start Program
- Asociación Puertorriqueños En Marcha (APM)’s Job Support and Benefits Enrollment
- Community Integrated Services’ Benefits Counseling Services

Though the Collective already provides several supportive services, LNPWI is encouraged to expand its existing partnerships to offer North Philadelphia’s residents increased access to current programs, as well as forge new partnerships with similar organizations. Some potential additions to the OWL Collective include:

- **PHLpreK Program** — Provided through the city, this program funds free, quality pre-K services at over 150 centers throughout Philadelphia, without any income eligibility requirements.²⁹ LNPWI could utilize a connection with this program by helping North Philadelphians become aware of this resource and assist in the enrollment process.
- **Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation’s Family Support Services** — PCDC helps low-income families throughout Philadelphia assess their needs and financial situation, access affordable rental housing, develop budgets and goals, and apply for low-income assistance programs.³⁰ Partnering with PCDC provides a path for North Philadelphians to learn about this resource that serves all of Philadelphia, but currently only has localized attention.

Table 11 – Entry-Level Positions with over 50% Female Employees

Job Titles	% Female
Medical Assistant	98%
Administrative Specialist	93%
Dental Assistant	92%
Social Work Services Trainee	86%
Retail Rx Technician	79%
Management Trainee	75%
Receptionist	68%
Auditor Trainee	67%
Account/Revenue/Auditor Trainee	65%
Graduate Environmental Engineer	62%
Security Officer	55%
Dispatcher	54%

Note: Percentages were rounded to the nearest 1%.



Population-Specific Services

Some of LNPWI's priority populations least represented through the OWL Collective are individuals with a disability (3.7% of targeted programs) and individuals with limited English proficiency (9% of targeted programs). Examples of existing partnerships include JEVS, specifically the HireAbility Program, and the Indo-Chinese American Council.

Though the OWL Collective already contains some programs focused specifically on these groups, North Philadelphia's community contains a large percentage of these populations. Specifically, the average percentage of individuals with a disability is higher in 5 of the 8 target zip codes than the city's average, and approximately 12% of the community speaks a language other than English at home.³¹ Because of this, new connections to specifically tailored programs should be built to expand these populations' access to workforce development services. Some organizations that could be considered include:

- **Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC)** — This organization is refugee-founded with a workforce of over 80% bi/multilingual staff, and provides several services surrounding education, health, and other social services to immigrants and refugees.³² SEAMAAC's ability to serve as many as 18 distinct linguistic communities would make this organization a beneficial addition to the OWL Collective as it would expand LNPWI's capabilities to serve minority populations.
- **PHMC PersonLink** — This program specializes in locating and coordinating services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. It does so by providing access to family aid services, recreational activity opportunities, and personalized Support Coordinators.³³ PersonLink's access to a wide array of resources and programs, when coupled with its dedication to providing personalized services, would make it a valuable additional resource for the Collective.

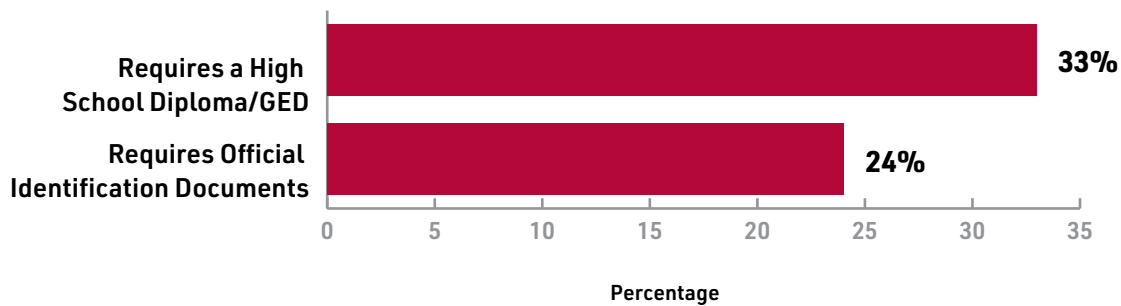
RECOMMENDATION 2

Construct new workforce development resources for individuals who do not have a high school diploma or official form of identification to ensure complete accessibility of OWL Collective resources.

The Deep Dive's focus on OWL Collective resources and services uncovered not only barriers to employment for North Philadelphia's communities, but also barriers to its own services. According to the various websites and webpages of the 169 programs studied, 33% require participants to have a High School Diploma or GED, and 24% require proof of legal residency within the United States. These proportions only include programs that specifically communicated these requirements — the actual percentage maintaining these barriers may be even larger. Though these proportions seem small in comparison to the sum of the Collective's services, it is important to note that individuals facing these barriers disproportionately represent locations and industries important to LNPWI.

- On average, one in four North Philadelphia residents do not have a high school diploma, which is the second most common education level in the area besides the 40% of residents with only a high school degree.³⁴ Not only do most entry-level positions require a high school diploma or equivalent, but some of the workforce development programs in Philadelphia do as well.
- As previously stated, undocumented people are estimated to make up nearly half of Philadelphia's foreign-born population. In the city's labor force, undocumented workers represent a significant portion of entry-level employees in some of the specific positions employers are struggling to fill: 23% of construction laborers, 22% of housekeeping services, 21% of grounds department workers, and 28% of painters are estimated to be undocumented.³⁵

Figure 11 – Restrictions to OWL Collective Resources



Website Scans of OWL Collective Members/Programs (March 2022)

These restrictions required by several OWL Collective's resources impact both the North Philadelphia community and the city's population as a whole at high rates. Populations already facing immense barriers to employment require increased access to workforce development services, not restricted access.

Adult Literacy

The OWL Collective already hosts a fair number of resources for adults to access basic learning services and High School Equivalency preparation (39.1% of targeted programs). Below are a few examples of existing partnerships with organizations and programs providing adult literacy services:

- Temple University's Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) Program
- Goodwill's Helms Academy
- Congreso's MyPlace
- District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund

Despite these existing partnerships, increasing LNPWI's capacity to provide these resources to North Philadelphia's communities will in turn expand access to the Collective's other, more employment-oriented services. An example of a program providing adult literacy services that is not currently in the OWL Collective is **Beyond Literacy**. This program was created in spring of 2021 through the merging of the Center for Literacy (CFL) and the Community Learning Center (CLC). Beyond Literacy serves 2,000 learners annually by providing basic skills instruction, basic financial literacy education, and GED preparation courses.³⁶ Not only would this program be an additional resource for GED attainment in the OWL Collective, but it also has the capacity to substantially expand the number of North Philadelphians with access to these resources.

Resources for Undocumented Immigrants

Whereas the OWL Collective already lacks resources targeted towards immigrants and individuals with limited English proficiency (10% of targeted programs), even fewer of these programs are specifically intended to serve undocumented Philadelphians. These existing partnerships include The Welcoming Center and Esperanza.

If LNPWI is determined to assist all North Philadelphia's communities in obtaining entry-level employment, an expansion of these types of resources is needed. Below are examples of other programs throughout Philadelphia that serve the city's undocumented population:

- **The Nationalities Service Center** — NSC's Refugee and Community Integration (RCI) department is the largest provider of services in the Philadelphia region for refugees, victims of human trafficking, and unaccompanied children.³⁷ These services include English classes, health and wellness resources, employment support and opportunities, and immigration legal services. These legal services are designed to help refugees obtain temporary work visas and permanent residency, making NSC a valuable resource for eliminating the barriers of other OWL Collective programs.
- **SEAMAAC** — Not only does SEAMAAC assist immigrants in education and employment, but the organization also helps undocumented individuals explore their options to achieving legal status.³⁸ Whereas undocumented Philadelphians may not even realize that there are ways for them to achieve permanent residency, temporary work visas, or even citizenship, this organization can help them through the entire process, which would then allow this population to access all the OWL Collective's services.

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS

LNPWI's OWL Collective already offers access to over 48 organizations and 160+ workforce development programs that provide diverse, in-demand resources to Philadelphia communities. Despite this, members of its Employer Council experience common challenges in recruiting and retaining entry-level workers, including an insufficient number of candidates (46%), recruiting for positions with unfavorable aspects or conditions (62%), and engaging with competition among other employers (62%). These conclusions point to an opportunity for LNPWI to easily increase its support of the Employer Council by actively facilitating connections between employers and existing resources relevant to their specific challenges.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Foster strong connections between employers and OWL Collective resources that can increase employers' access to potential candidates, including not only services providing referral/job placement activities, but also training and certification organizations.

Throughout interviews, members of the Employer Council expressed a particular challenge not only attracting a large pool of applicants but finding candidates that are prepared to undertake these roles, especially for positions that may have traditionally unattractive conditions or qualities. Specifically, employers spoke to aspects like required overnight shifts, potential for political backlash, high exposure to COVID-19, and stress from being an essential worker as some of the reasons that individuals find a position unattractive. These conditions not only turn away applicants, but also cause high turnover rates in these entry-level positions due to a lack of realistic expectations from the employee.

- Studies find that candidates who can grasp a realistic expectation of the full scope and responsibilities of a position show increased satisfaction in their career, and lead to decreased turnover rates for that position. Realistic Job Previews (RJPs) have become a recruiting tool that emphasizes the communication of both good and bad aspects of a job and are considered to enrich the socialization process between the employer and a potential candidate. Not only are candidates given more realistic expectations, but some believe that this improvement in communication during the recruitment process influences the candidate's attitude towards the employer in general.³⁹

Specific Referral Services

The OWL Collective already provides moderate access referral and job placement resources for individuals (23.6%), but there is room for the network to grow in this area. JEVS' Project WOW initiative is an example of one of the forty programs under the Collective that offers referrals or job placement assistance as one of its services.

A limitation of the Collective's existing resources for employee referrals is that a majority are in school-based settings and thus serve only students and/or young adults. Though these programs support Opportunity Youth in North Philadelphia, one of LNPWI's priority populations, other resources targeting older populations should be considered as well. Some potential programs that offer referral and job placement services that are not based in schools include:

- **Avenica** — Offering services to both job seekers and employers, Avenica is an online career matchmaking service that helps companies fill positions with specific needs and competencies. The program focuses on active, rather than reactive, recruitment strategies that not only engages thousands of candidates, but also provides the coaching, mentorship, and training needed to fulfill the role in question.⁴⁰ The Employer Council would benefit from these services, as well as from Avenica's unique system of identifying candidates' transferable skills that qualify them for entry level positions, whether or not the candidate themselves is aware of their qualification.

- **YearUp** — This organization works with both students and corporate partners to fill entry-level positions with qualified, dedicated employees. Utilized by over 250 of today's top companies, YearUp's services are successful in helping employers access diverse candidate pools, effectively screen and assess potential candidates, and engage in both short- and long-term hiring strategies.⁴¹ Members of the Employer Council would not only benefit from YearUp's employee pipeline from their own training programs to its corporate partners, but could also learn about new, diverse hiring and recruitment strategies.
- **Philadelphia Technician Training Institute** — PTTI is primarily a trade school in Philadelphia, but also provides extensive support services to its alumni. According to their website, the Institute has successfully helped 70% of its graduates secure high-paying jobs in building trades such as welding, concreting, pipe fitting, and advanced manufacturing, among others.⁴² For Council members looking for candidates to fill trades-oriented positions, a connection to PTTI would be highly beneficial in providing access to talented employees who are adequately trained and prepared for specific entry-level positions.

Training and Certification Services

LNPWI's network of workforce development resources includes an abundance of programs and work experience (53.2%), or opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials (55%). Many of these programs are already successful in supporting North Philadelphia residents but have not yet been utilized specifically as sources of candidates by employers. Below are a few examples of current training programs within the OWL Collective that have the potential to also provide referral services to employers according to their industry and required competencies:

- **IT & Technology**
 - **Coded by Kids** — This program's primary goal is providing young people from underrepresented populations with educational tools in software development, digital design, and computer science. In the program's upper-level courses, however, students are given the opportunity to complete internships that connect them to on-the-job experience and training, and potentially to future employment opportunities.⁴³
 - **TechImpact ITWorks** — This training program prepares young adults for entry-level careers in the technology industry. In addition to the free 16-week educational program, TechImpact provides participants with the opportunity to earn essential certifications for entry-level positions like Help Desk Technicians, User Support Techs, and IT Specialists. The program boasts over 600 graduates with a 75% employment placement rate within 6 months of graduation.⁴⁴
- **Healthcare**
 - **Congreso Human Services Pathway Program** — Designed to prepare students in the human services field, the Human Services Pathway Program provides students with both classroom instruction and hands-on training for careers in healthcare and client services. In addition, all participants are offered an internship with local employers to provide on-the-job experience and provide job placement services after completion of the program.⁴⁵
 - **TempleCARES** — Housed within the school's College of Education and Human Development, this program provides professional development, industry recognized credentials, and paid work experiences to young adults in North Philadelphia who are interested in entering the healthcare industry. Graduates of the program are given ample opportunities to apply and interview for full-time employment and have access to job coaching services once hired.⁴⁶

- Construction/Building Trades
 - **Impact Services Corp Trades Program** — This new program was launched in January 2022 and aims to create pathways to union jobs in the construction industry. After a two-week boot camp and orientation into the different trade options, participants engage in pre-apprenticeships and/or work programs through local training vendors and companies. Impact Services is committed to finding the best job placements for all participants by utilizing its partnerships with unions, training providers, and employers.⁴⁷
 - **Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)** — This organization primarily serves people returning from incarceration by offering opportunities for immediate paid employment, skills training, and general career support. Participants are guaranteed up to four days a week of transitional work with daily pay, and wraparound vocational support services to support full-time employment.⁴⁸

RECOMMENDATION 2

Identify opportunities for employers to provide upskilling and career advancement resources to employees by utilizing current OWL Collective organizations and seeking new resources if necessary.

Employees in Philadelphia, as well as the United States as a whole, currently have the power to decide where they work, what they do, and what benefits they receive. As a result, employers are competing with one another by increasing their employees' wages and benefits in an attempt to win over candidates and retain employees. However, this may not be the only way for employers to successfully attract and retain applicants.

- Opportunities to upskill and advance their careers beyond entry-level positions has become much more important to candidates when considering job offers. Young adults ranked upskilling as the third-most influential benefit when deciding to accept or reject a job offer, behind only pay and health benefits.⁴⁹ Similarly, a study by Bright Horizons found that 60% of millennials would rather work somewhere with professional development opportunities than regular pay raises.⁵⁰
- Upward mobility not only increases the likelihood that a candidate will choose one employer over the other but has also been found to improve retention within current employees. On average, workers who are given the ability to upskill are more satisfied with their job's pay rate and schedule and experience a higher sense of purpose.⁵¹ Additionally, 62% of workers say that opportunities to reskill and upskill would incentivize them to stay with a current employer.⁵²

These findings indicate that focusing efforts on providing employees with opportunities for growth may help members of the Employer Council mitigate their current challenges surrounding recruitment and retention.

Entry-Level Services

Entry-level workforce development resources are already offered by over half of all programs under the OWL Collective (53.3%). These services include assistance with resumes and cover letters, career coaching, and interview preparation, to name a few. Below are only a few examples of these resources available through the Collective:

- **LevelUp Philadelphia** — Partnering with Philadelphia Works, this program supports individuals by providing career exploration tools, career coaching, training and education programs, and connections to local employers. LevelUp provides access to vetted short-term training programs for some of the city's high-growth, entry-level careers such as web developers, medical assistants, and HVAC technicians.⁵³
- **Temple OWL Hub** — The OWL Hub offers two courses that specifically prepare participants for success in entry-level employment. The Learn to Earn course offered by PASCEP provides instruction on developing foundational skills, soft skills, career goals, and personal growth.⁵⁴ The myPLACE Campus at Temple provides academic enrichment opportunities for any individuals seeking educational, career, or digital instruction in order to acquire a career in an entry-level position.⁵⁵
- **CIS** — In addition to its Benefits Counseling services, Community Integrated Services provides individuals with a disability with the tools needed to succeed in a work environment. Specific services offered include resume development, job interview preparation, and career exploration activities.⁵⁶

Reskilling/Upskilling Opportunities

Despite its abundance of entry-level career development partners, the OWL Collective currently has not expanded these resources to serve those who are already employed and are looking to advance in their career (8%). The following details one of the existing partnerships that could be expanded to reach this goal:

- **District 1199 Training and Upgrading Fund** — This program's mission is to provide access to career pathways in healthcare and human services, specifically for incumbent workers. The Fund works individually with participants to explore pathways to upskilling opportunities, providing them with the training and educational resources necessary to achieve career advancement.⁵⁷

For employers without the capacity to provide upskilling services, LNPWI should seek programs and resources that aid employers in doing so. Below is a list of organizations available to members of the Employer Council whose primary goal is assisting employers with upskilling:

- **Philadelphia Works Incumbent Worker Training** — This program is one of the many workforce development services provided by Philadelphia Works but is intended specifically for currently employed individuals with an established work history of at least six months. Philaworks recognizes that these employees have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for their current position, but wants to provide opportunities for companies to avoid layoffs and turnover by providing additional training needed for higher-level positions.⁵⁸
- **Graduate Philadelphia's Skills Forward Initiative** — Partnering with Accenture, Philadelphia Works, and Philadelphia's Chamber of Commerce, this program seeks to create flexible and engaging training programs that offer both job seekers and entry-level employees with the resources needed to make successful career transitions. The program already supports many of the city's major employers, including Penn Medicine, PECO, and SEPTA.⁵⁹
- **WEDnetPA** — This program serves employees and companies across the state with the goal of improving the skill level and productivity of Pennsylvania's workforce. Eligible in-state businesses can apply to WEDnetPA to access funds that can be used towards reskilling and upskilling current employees.⁶⁰



Conclusion

When the Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative was established in March 2018, the primary goal of the initiative was to break the cycle of poverty in North Philadelphia by connecting its communities to both workforce development resources and opportunities for employment. Just over a year later, LNPWI met this objective with the creation of the OWL Collective, a vast, city-wide network of organizations offering educational resources, opportunities for training and work experience, and career development services.

The second step in achieving LNPWI's goal was to forge similar connections with Philadelphia's major employers to identify entry-level opportunities for workers in North Philadelphia. In forming the Employer Council, the organization was able to launch this effort by fostering a space for employers to discuss their current challenges in recruiting and retaining entry-level employees. With this new source of insight, the next step in achieving LNPWI's primary goal is to strengthen connectivity and alignment between members of the Employer Council and programs within the OWL Collective that meet and address each employer's specific needs and challenges. By following these recommendations, LNPWI will be able to successfully allow North Philadelphia communities and major employers to act as resources to one another in ultimately improving the city's workforce and opening new employment opportunities to North Philadelphians.

Appendices

Appendix A – List of OWL Collective Members

Resources are listed in the order mentioned in the report.

* = received funding
from LNPWI

APM, Inc.	Maternity Care Coalition*
AHARI Homes	MyPlace Campus at Temple University*
Big Picture Philadelphia*	NKCDC
Called to Serve CDC*	Office of Community Relations, Temple University
Center for Empowerment and Opportunity, City of Philadelphia	PA CareerLink North*
Center for Employment Opportunities*	PA CareerLink Northwest
Coded By Kids	Pan African Studies Community Education Program, Temple University*
College of Education, Temple University*	Philabundance
College of Science and Technology, Temple University	Philadelphia Housing Authority*
Community Integrated Services*	Philadelphia OIC
Congreso de Latinos Unidos*	Philly Connect Project HOME*
District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund	Rebuild Philadelphia, City of Philadelphia
Esperanza*	Simon Gratz Mastery Charter School
Helms Academy North, Goodwill Industries	Steppingstones Scholars*
Human Resources Department, Temple University	TechImpact
Indochinese American Council	The Economy League of Greater Philadelphia
Information and Technology Services, Temple University*	The Free Library of Philadelphia
Institute on Disabilities, Temple University*	The St. James School
Institutional Advancement, Temple University	The Village of Arts and Humanities
JEVS Human Services	The Welcoming Center
Lenfest Center for Community Workforce Partnership, Temple University	This is Opportunity, Inc.
Lewis Katz School of Medicine Center for Urban Bioethics, Temple University*	The West Philadelphia Skills Initiative
Job Corps	YESPhilly YouthBuild Philadelphia
LISC	University College, Temple University

Appendix B – List of Employer Council Members

Allied Universal Security Services*	Philadelphia School District
City of Philadelphia HR & Talent Unit**	PhilaWorks
Comcast*	Temple University**
CVS Health**	Temple University Campus Safety*
JP Morgan	Temple University IDEAL
Lenfest Foundation	Temple University Institutional Advancement
NWON Opportunities*	Temple University IT Services*
Oak Street Health*	Temple University Office of the Provost
PECO*	Temple University Public Health*
Philadelphia Housing Authority*	Temple University Service Operations*
Philadelphia Police Department	Temple University Small Business Center

* = participated in an interview

** = provided position-level data

Appendix C – Full Methodology

Employer Interviews

Data Collection

* See Appendices A and B for full list of participants.

Over the course of six months, ELGP was successful in conducting semi-structured interviews with 13 members of the Employer Council, representing 65% of all employers in the Council.* These discussions lasted approximately 45 minutes and focused on answering the following questions:

- What are the major challenges facing employers in recruiting and retaining Philadelphia’s talent?
- What practices do employers currently engage in to combat these challenges?

Through these interviews, ELGP acquired a detailed understanding of employers’ recruiting and retention challenges as well as the barriers North Philadelphia residents may face when applying for employment with these employers.

Analysis

Interviews with members of the Employer Council yielded information on both the challenges faced by employers in Philadelphia as well as any methods utilized to address these challenges. Through use of a grounded-theory approach, seven challenge categories were identified based on the frequency in which the challenge was mentioned by employers. Thematic employer practices were also identified and labeled using the same strategy.

Entry-Level Employment Data

Data Collection

Following each interview, ELGP reached out to each of the 13 participants to inquire about their data-sharing capabilities. The goal was to acquire certain non-identifiable, position-level occupational data that would help to contextualize the information received from interviews and enrich the findings of the Deep Dive. Employers were asked to provide this information in the most convenient format possible, whether it be through sharing portions of an existing internal database or by compiling the requested data points into a new resource specific to this request. The following data points were requested per entry level position:

- Total number of employees
- Starting and/or average wage
- Race/ethnicity, gender, and age of employees
- Retention/turnover rates
- Home zip code of employees
- Number of separations in 2021

This step in the Deep Dive’s research process was important in providing quantitative contexts to the challenges discussed in interviews. By considering the composition of employers, entry-level positions, and employees in Philadelphia, this data also informed LNPWI on the current economic and employment climate of a few major employers within the city.

Analysis

ELGP successfully collected the requested HR data from three of the 13 participants. Analysis of this data allowed for the identification of numerous hard-to-fill, entry level positions, as well as their current starting wages, demographics, and separation rates. These findings are presented throughout the report as a sampling of entry-level opportunities at major Philadelphia employers, but only represent a portion of Employer Council members.

Appendix D – OWL Collective Content Analysis

Data Collection

Using a list of 169 workforce development programs led by members of the OWL Collective, ELGP created a comprehensive list of the programs and services in partnership with LNPWI. After identifying each program's webpage or website, a content analysis of each program's available resources was conducted. This information allowed ELGP to gain a full view of the resources available to employers through their engagement with LNPWI.

Analysis

To gain a full understanding of what engagement with LNPWI offers employers, each program offered by a member of the OWL Collective was investigated through a content analysis approach to identify the type(s) of services it offers and the population(s) it intends to serve. This was carried out through the thematic analysis of each program's website or webpage, as well as any other publicly available information on the organization. A similar system was used to determine the frequency of programs serving LNPWI's priority populations. The number of services specifically targeting these populations is summarized by comparing it to the total number of programs that specify a target population.

Limitations

In summary, ELGP was able to collect sufficient information to speak to employers' challenges and needs as well as the OWL Collective's composition and could produce detailed recommendations for LNPWI utilizing this information. However, the Deep Dive was only partially successful in collecting specific HR data on entry-level positions, receiving data from just three of the 13 Employer Council participants. Although the data collected was sufficient in providing insights into the employment landscape and opportunities in Philadelphia, a larger sample size would have made for a more complete view of the city's entry-level employment landscape.

Appendix E – Definitions

Employer Council Challenges (Definitions)

- Education/Certification Requirements — Employers struggle to find candidates who meet educational or certification requirements for the position in question
- Background Requirements — Employers struggle to find candidates who can pass background checks, drug tests, or security requirements for the position in question
- Competition for Candidates — Employers struggle with competition for candidates among other employers for the position in question
- Pandemic-Related Loss — Employers struggle with employee/candidate loss for this position due to the pandemic, whether due to health concerns or increased responsibilities at home
- Position Dissatisfaction — Employers struggle to fill the position in question due to an undesirable aspect of the position
- Lack of Support Services — Employers struggle to find candidates that have access to the necessary social services to fulfill the position in question
- Insufficient Applicant Pool — Employers struggle to attract a sufficient number or diverse pool of applicants

Employer Practices (Definitions)

- Providing Training Opportunities — Employers offer internal or external training resources to candidates or employees
- Providing Growth Opportunities — Employers offer specific opportunities for growth or upward advancement within the organization
- Engaging in Local Recruitment — Employers recruit from local, diverse communities and locations
- Increasing Benefits — Employers have raised the wages or increased benefits to employees in the position in question
- Increasing Flexibility — Employers offer flexibility to employees in terms of work locations or schedule
- Improving Recruitment Strategies — Employers employ diverse recruitment strategies and/or have made an effort to increase or improve their recruitment
- Partnering with Workforce Development Organizations — Employers are engaged in partnerships with workforce development organizations that provide either training or recruitment services

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Acknowledgments

The Temple University Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative and the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia would like to thank the members of the Temple University Employer Council for Local Hiring and the Opportunities for Workforce Leadership Collective for their input and guidance throughout this study. We extend special thanks to Allied University Security Services, City of Philadelphia, Comcast, CVS Health, Nwon Opportunities, Oak Street Health, PECO, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, Temple University, and Temple Health for providing important data, including surveys, interviews, and analysis of human resources information, to help inform this study. This information provided a robust perspective on strengths, challenges, and opportunities within the North Philadelphia workforce development ecosystem. We also would like to thank the University City District's West Philadelphia Skills Initiative for their integral role as a key advisor, thought partner, and supporter in developing and implementing this deep dive. And finally, we thank Taylor Stenley for her significant contributions in the analysis of the data and writing of this report.



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The research for this report was conducted using grants from JPMorgan Chase Foundation and The Lenfest Foundation. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of JPMorgan Chase Foundation or the Lenfest Foundation.



Published in October 2022 (v1)

Design and layout by Pryme Design